

III. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE
SOCIAL AND
THE SEXUAL ASPECTS OF
DEVELOPMENT

Having completed my survey of those data of children's sexual development brought together in this volume, I must now summarise the way in which the sexual aspect of children's development is linked up with the social. Before doing this, however, there is a qualification which needs to be made.

I have considered the material in so far as it illustrates the sexual impulses and phantasies shown, either directly or indirectly, in the behaviour of little children at different stages of their development, and the relation of these wishes and phantasies to the early anxieties and guilt. But such a presentation of sexual development is somewhat one-sided, since it lays more emphasis on the element of wish and phantasy than on the actual situations in real experience which have evoked those wishes and phantasies. The dynamic meaning of these latter, however, is always drawn from the child's total relation to external events at the moment, that is to say, to the real behaviour of other children and adults—apart, of course, from those situations of pure play which the child creates for himself by the spontaneous expression of phantasy. Even here, however, the expression of phantasy will have reference either to past real situations, or to hypothetical real situations. What we are dealing with in attempting to understand the child's behaviour at any given moment is always a situation of interplay between the child himself, and actual or possible events. And we cannot understand

the actual course of his behaviour at any moment unless we take into account these external factors as fully as the internal.

I have, I think, made it sufficiently clear in a broad general way, that I take this view, and I have detailed it here and there ;. but in this general exposition of the sexual development of children, I have tended to emphasise wish and phantasy more-than external stimuli. This has come about partly for lack of space, but partly also because at the time when I was collecting this material in the years 1924-27,1 was still so much an elementary student of children's sexual development that I concerned myself more fully with a